

Health Promotion Resource Guide

Needs Assessment: Weight Management



How to determine if your installation needs a weight management program

Ask questions that will show evidence** of the need for a program at your installation.

**This evidence is critical in order to get Command support.

A needs assessment does not have to be complicated.

BUT: use as many information sources as possible and talk to as many people as you can.

Where to get information about weight management (WM) needs at your installation

- Talk to **line leaders and cadre**. Question to ask: are units noticing WM issues?
- Take a formal or informal survey of **health care providers**. Questions to ask: what WM issues do patients have already? What questions are patients asking about WM?
- Go to **other subject matter experts** in physical therapy, nutrition care, and community health nursing. Question to ask: what do these health care professionals see and hear from patients?
- Go out into the **community**. Conduct **surveys** and do **interviews**. Talking only to clinic or hospital staff and patients may give a skewed view of WM issues in the community. Questions to ask: what are your top three health concerns? Would the installation community benefit from a WM program?

HELPFUL HINT: Make sure that surveys and interviews are as short as possible.
Five questions or less is a good length.

- Talk with **MWR, family support groups, Children and Youth Services**. Consider **requests** the hospital and wellness center receive from patients, the community, the installation and Command. Question to ask: how frequently is WM mentioned?
- Use information from the **HRA, HEAR, CHCS, or other electronic databases**. This information details population health needs as well as services that are already being provided. Question to ask: how prevalent in the population are WM-related health issues (such as type 2 diabetes)?

Other questions to ask

- How do WM issues **impact readiness** and **deployability** at your installation?
- What is the **likelihood** that WM is a problem at your installation? A large trainee population may have fewer WM issues than permanent party, beneficiaries, or retirees.
- What activities/programs are **already offered** by other hospital departments, installation organizations and community health groups? A brand new program may not be necessary if other programs are already in place.
- What **partnership opportunities** exist to maximize available resources?
- What **costs** are associated with WM issues? What costs could be **avoided** if an effective WM program were in place?

Write down the answers to all these questions.

Use the answers to determine if the installation needs a WM program.

Bottom line

Is there enough evidence to make the case to Command for resources to support a WM program?

If there is insufficient evidence, perhaps resources would be better spent on something else.